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C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000322

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR EAP/ANP AND SCA/A TOM REOTT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/30/2018
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [NZ](#)
SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND AND ANA EXPANSION

REF: STATE 97592

Classified By: Acting DCM Margaret McKean; Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On September 18, A/DCM met with Wayne Higgins, Director for the Ministry of Defense International Relations Division, MOD defense policy and planning analyst Greg Mitchell, Ron Logan, MOD staff officer to the Chief of Defense Force, and Richard Prendergast from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade International Security and Disarmament Division policy officer for NATO. A/DCM noted that the Afghan National Army's proposed expansion plan will require additional international support and financing; the USG is currently discussing financial contributions with other NATO allies and partners to assist the Afghan government meet its national security challenges. She thanked the GNZ for its contribution in Bamiyan province and the ongoing work of the New Zealand Defense Force PRT there. She also noted that the USG would defer making a specific request to the GNZ until after New Zealand's national elections in early November.

¶2. (C) GNZ officials expressed strong support for the planned ANA expansion, characterizing the 134,000-strong force as a "positive development." Higgins added that the "more the Afghans do, the less we have to do." Higgins noted, however, that even with a change in government in New Zealand, the GNZ's potential financial contribution would be a question mark. GNZ support for Afghanistan totals roughly NZD 21 million but none of the money goes to the Afghan National Army; rather, it goes to development efforts based on the needs outlined at the Paris donors' meetings. Higgins questioned how Afghanistan could afford the military expansion over the longer term when it's GDP is less than 9 billion per year -- the military alone currently requires \$5-6 billion per year, said Higgins.

¶3. (C) Higgins and the other officials observed that any request for new funding submitted to the GNZ would be assessed against other competing GNZ needs at a time when the country is technically in recession.
KEEGAN